

June 7, 2005

Professor Walter E. Stamm, Co-chair  
Joint Faculty Senate/Provost RBL Siting Committee  
Division of Allergy and Infectious Disease  
Box 356523

Professor Douglas J. Wadden, Co-chair  
Joint Faculty Senate/Provost RBL Siting Committee  
Past Chair, Faculty Senate  
Box 353440

Dear Walter and Doug,

Thank you and the members of the joint committee for your work in examining the various options and issues surrounding the siting of a proposed Regional Biocontainment Laboratory at the University of Washington. You have produced a careful and thorough analysis that will aid me considerably as I evaluate the several options and move toward a decision on this matter. I greatly appreciate your completing the work in a timely fashion—your report has been posted to the RBL web site and is available there for all to read.

In addition to your work, I have now received the summary report of the public forums held in February, March, and April, compiled at my request by Dr. Steven Olswang. That report also has been posted to the RBL web site. Among the principal concerns expressed at these forums is the safety and security of the proposed laboratory facility. In deciding whether to site a facility on or near the campus, I want to be completely assured that all safety and security issues are being dealt with adequately, and that we are convinced that the laboratory would be safe from potential releases of any bio-materials and secure from possible sabotage. Therefore, I have decided to ask independent experts to examine the plans that have been developed thus far and to provide their judgment on the adequacy of the proposed safeguards.

We expect to hear from the NIAID later this summer regarding the status of the grant proposal submitted in late December. This, of course, is a crucial piece of information in the decision matrix. I had hoped that all pertinent data would be available by the time of our June Regents meeting. However, with the NIAID decision taking longer than originally anticipated and my intention to commission an independent assessment of the safety issues, any decision on this matter will not be made until later this summer or possibly early fall,

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depending on when we have all of the necessary information. As further details come in, I will continue to evaluate and explore the many aspects of the proposal. Once we have all of the information, including the status of the funding proposal, I will be able to make a decision whether to recommend to the Board of Regents that the University proceed with the project.

Thank you again for your diligence and hard work.

Sincerely yours,



Mark A. Emmert  
President

cc: Committee members  
Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
ASUW president  
GPSS president